

Amendment dated

Reply to Office Action dated August 19, 2004

REMARKS

The Applicant wishes to thank the Examiner for thoroughly reviewing and considering the pending application. The Office Action dated August 19, 2004 has been received and carefully reviewed. Claims 1-23 are currently pending. Claims 1-3, 5, 6, 8, 11-20, 22 and 23 have been amended. Reexamination and reconsideration are respectfully requested.

The Office Action objected to claims 17-23 as noted therein. The Applicant has amended the claims, and respectfully requests that the Examiner withdraw the rejection.

The Office Action also rejected claims 11-12 and 17-23 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which the Applicant regards as the invention, as discussed in the Office Action. Again, the Applicant has amended the claims, and requests that the Examiner withdraw the rejection.

In addition, the Office Action rejected claims 1, 3-13 and 15-23 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,141,887 to *Chen et al.* (hereinafter “*Chen*”) in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,385,452 to *Deschaaf et al.* (hereinafter “*Deschaaf*”). The Applicant respectfully traverses the rejection.

As required in Chapter 2143.03 of the M.P.E.P., in order to “establish *prima facie* obviousness of the claimed invention, all the limitations must be taught or suggested by the prior art.” The Applicant respectfully submits that neither *Chen* nor *Deschaaf*, either singularly or in combination, disclose each and every element recited in claims 1, 3-13 and 15-23. In particular, claim 1 recites a sensor assembly comprising, among other features, “an electrically non-conductive sensor body secured directly to the bulkhead, the sensor body being positioned so as to cover a portion of the air outlet opening.” Neither *Chen* nor *Deschaaf*, either singularly or in

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combination, disclose this feature. At best, *Chen* discloses a humidity sensor 148 disposed within an exhaust duct of a clothes dryer 146. See Figure 5. However, the humidity sensor 148 clearly does not secure “directly to the bulkhead, the sensor body being positioned so as to cover a portion of the air outlet opening” as recited in claim 1. Likewise, *Deschaaf* does not disclose this feature. At most, *Deschaaf* discloses a sensor 30 disposed on a rotatable drum 22. See Figures 1 and 2. Accordingly, the Applicant respectfully submits that claim 1 is patentable over *Chen* in view of *Deschaaf* and requests that the rejection be withdrawn. Likewise, claims 3-12, which depend from claim 1, are also patentable for at least the same reasons.

Claim 13 is also patentable over *Chen* in view of *Deschaaf*. To further illustrate, claim 13 recites an automatic dryer comprising, among other features, “an electrically non-conductive sensor body secured directly to the front bulkhead, the sensor body being positioned so as to cover a portion of the air outlet opening” and “a perforated air outlet grill being rigidly secured to the front bulkhead and covering the remaining portion of the air outlet opening.” As stated above, neither *Chen* nor *Deschaaf* teach or suggest a sensor secured to a bulkhead, wherein the sensor partially covers an air outlet opening. In addition, neither *Chen* nor *Deschaaf*, either singularly or in combination, disclose or suggest a perforated air outlet grill rigidly secured to the “front bulkhead” and covering the remaining portion of the air outlet opening as recited in claim 13. *Chen* simply does not disclose “a perforated air outlet grill.” *Deschaaf* does not disclose “a perforated air outlet grill being rigidly secured to the front bulkhead.” At best, *Deschaaf* teaches that an air outlet aperture 28 is formed in a rear stationary bulkhead 24. Accordingly, claim 13 is patentable over *Chen* in view of *Deschaaf* and the Applicant requests that the rejection be withdrawn. Similarly, claims 15-23, which depend from claim 13, are also patentable over *Chen* in view of *Deschaaf* for at least the same reasons.

The Office Action also rejected claims 2 and 14 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over *Chen* in view of *Deschaaf* and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,940,986 to *Jelinek et al.* (hereinafter “*Jelinek*”). As discussed above, neither *Chen* nor *Deschaaf* disclose all the elements recited in claims 1 and 13, from which claims 2 and 14 depend respectively. Moreover, *Jelinek* does not overcome the deficiencies of *Chen* and *Deschaaf*. In particular, *Jelinek* does not disclose “an electrically non-conductive sensor body secured directly to the bulkhead” as recited in claim 1. Likewise, *Jelinek* does not disclose “an electrically non-conductive sensor body secured directly to the front bulkhead” as recited in claim 13. Therefore, claims 2 and 14 are patentable over *Chen* in view of *Deschaaf* and further in view of *Jelinek* and the Applicant respectfully requests that the rejection be withdrawn.

The Applicant believes the application is in a condition for allowance and early, favorable action is respectfully solicited. If for any reason the Examiner finds the application other than in condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to call the undersigned attorney at (202) 496-7500 to discuss the steps necessary for placing the application in condition for allowance. All correspondence should continue to be sent to the below-listed address.

If these papers are not considered timely filed by the Patent and Trademark Office, then a petition is hereby made under 37 C.F.R. § 1.136, and any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. § 1.136 for any necessary extension of time, or any other fees required to complete the

Application No.: 10/622,453

Docket No.: 9988.039.00-US

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filings of this response, may be charged to Deposit Account No. 50-0911. Please credit any overpayment to deposit Account No. 50-0911. A duplicate copy of this sheet is enclosed.

Dated: November 19, 2004

Respectfully submitted,

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